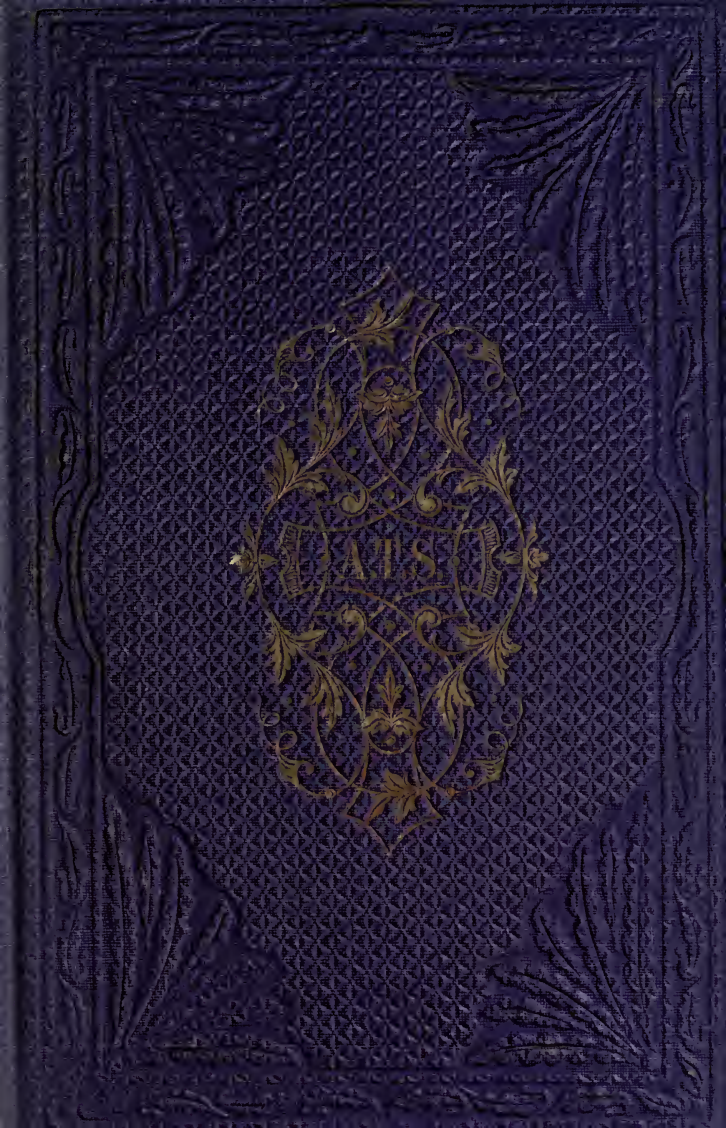
VAISE

PZ6
B25W66
1862

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

Rare Book Room

GIFT OF

John W. Beckman

Louisa Woods Baker.

November 10th

1862.

Brussc

THE

WOODMAN'S NANNETTE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE BLUE FLAG," "THE AUNT FRIENDLY BOOKS," ETC.

Sarah Woods Baker

"She hath done what she could."

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW YORK.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by the American Tract Society, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of the State of New York.

THERE are few peculiarities which more distinctly mark the difference between a heathen and a Christian nation, than the treatment of the unfortunate of our race. If one kindly effort should be prompted, or one heart stirred to greater gratitude, the writer's object in the conception and description of the character of Nannette will not be lost.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.
An odd Nurse ---------- 7

CHAPTER II.
Reconciliation ---------- 14

CHAPTER III.
An Offer ---------- 25

CHAPTER IV.
Bessie ---------- 33

CHAPTER V.
A Young Traveller ---------- 40

CHAPTER VI.
The Asylum ---------- 45

CHAPTER VII.
Bessie's Petition ---------- 49

CHAPTER VIII.
The Visit ---------- 65

CHAPTER IX.
Seeing Wonders ---------- 73

CHAPTER X.
Reunion ---------- 78

CHAPTER XI.
A Time of Need ---------- 87

CHAPTER XII.
A Welcome Guest ---------- 92

CHAPTER XIII.
Ben at Home ---------- 97

CHAPTER XIV.
Light at Evening-time ---------- 105

THE

WOODMAN'S NANNETTE.

CHAPTER I.

AN ODD NURSE.

On the edge of one of our western forests stood a small log-house. It was a summer afternoon, and the low windows were wide open, so that a curious traveller could readily have had a peep at what was going on within. Travellers, however, were rarely seen along that road; and the rough woodmen who went by on their loaded wagons, only stopped to get a cup of pure water from the cool spring near the cottage.

So it happened that the only human

being within the house had a nice long nap that June day. Snug in its cradle lay a plump, rosy baby, with its hand doubled up in its sleep, and its flaxen hair lying light about its head, like a halo.

Just as sweet and fresh and beautiful looked that little darling, as if it had been in a swinging basket wadded with down and lined with silk; and yet its cradle was but a wooden trough set upon rockers, a piece of its father's own handiwork.

To and fro moved the rough cradle, while the paw of a great dog was on the rocker, gently and carefully keeping up the motion. A queer-looking nurse truly was that large, spotted dog, with his earnest brown eyes and his wise countenance. He seemed to think himself fully competent for the business, and certainly he was a trustworthy creature. Not

once had he left his position since his mistress had shut the door behind her, though a tumbler of sweet milk stood on a table near him, and a big pussy-cat was sunning herself in the window.

Even the dog Bounce could not make baby's nap last all the afternoon, though he rocked away as faithfully as if he were to have a bite of fresh meat for every moment she slept.

Little Nannette was restless at first; then she suddenly opened her great blue eyes, and looked straight at Bounce, as much as to say, "You need n't rock any more, for I am quite done with business of that kind." There was a dreamy, queer look to her eyes, after all, and she had to rub them well before she was half as wide awake as she pretended to be.

Bounce put his head into the cradle, and presumed to give that little rosy cheek that was fit for a princess to kiss,

a salute with his own red tongue. Baby Nannette did not take it at all amiss, but laid hold of his ear in return; and so they were on friendly terms at once. But this could not last always, and Nannette at length began to pucker up her little face and make ready to cry.

Bounce did not wait any longer, but going to the window the cat had left vacant, he put his forepaws on the sill, and set up such a shrill bark as would be heard for many a rod. A strong, loud sound it was; yet little Nannette did not seem to notice it; she did not even turn her head that way, but kept snivelling up her little nose, and making it look like a wrinkled cherry, which by no means added to her beauty. At the window, barking away, Bounce kept his place until he saw a woman come out of the forest with a bundle of sticks on her head. Slight and girlish was the wom-

an's figure, and young and cheerful was her face, and yet no one could doubt that she was the mother of the waking baby, there was such a sweet, earnest, loving look in her countenance as she moved very rapidly towards the cottage. Bounce gave a quick low bark of satisfaction as she entered his nursery; but Nannette kept up her low whimper until her mother was fairly bending over her; then the little nose was smoothed out all at once, and her eyes laughed out their joy from behind their cloud of recent tears.

What a time the mother and baby had together; what a merry-making all in their own way! while Bounce capered about them, apparently quite glad to be relieved from his responsible position. Nannette returned smile for smile, and a winning, tender look for every soft caress. Perhaps her mother was not skilled in baby-talk, or Nannette was very

ungrateful; or perhaps she did not quite believe she was the "precious, darling, deary pet" that her mother described in such glowing colors. At any rate, Nannette seemed to take all the smiles and kisses, while the pretty words did not make her so much as wink one of her round blue eyes.

When the tumbler of milk and a full half slice of bread had made Nannette very comfortable, she was ready to see Bounce sit with a crumb on his nose, not once offering to stir until he heard the word of command, and then he threw the precious morsel into the air, and caught it in his mouth, while baby Nannette clapped her hands with delight.

The mother placed Nannette on the floor, and then stepping out the door, she waited a minute, and came in very softly, her face towards the child's back. "Here's mamma!" she exclaimed; but

Nannette did not turn her head until Bounce made a great leap towards his mistress.

This was perhaps the hundredth time that the mother had tried the same experiment with as little success.

"Poor dear," she said, as she took Nannette the more tenderly in her arms, "poor dear, she will never hear any cross words, and her mother will love her all the better." Yes, Nannette was perfectly deaf. The mother knew it; she had suspected it these three months; and yet she was ever making a new trial, to be but the more surely convinced of the sad fact.

There was nothing wrong about the baby's sweet mouth; all was right in that wee red-lined throat. Dear, pleasant words she might soon have spoken; but with those closed ears she must ever be silent. She must be deaf and dumb!

CHAPTER II.

RECONCILIATION.

Two years had passed away very happily for Nannette. She could run about now, and pluck the dandelions by the door-stone, or sift the dry sand of the pathway through her plump fingers. She had Bounce for her play-fellow, and her mother for her admirer, and so she got on very well, though she was deaf and dumb.

Ben Kuhn and his wife Kitty thought their Nannette the prettiest child in the county; and if she could not speak, she had a thousand sweet ways of her own. She could so imitate the motions of the great rooster that flapped his wings and crowed on the fence, that you expected

every minute to hear an exact counterpart of his note come from her open mouth. As for Bounce and the cat, she had a way of caricaturing all their movements and manners, which prompted Ben to many a hearty laugh, and served him for entertainment when he came home from his day's work.

As the years passed by, one trouble lay heavy on Kitty's mind. She had a Friend who was dearer to her than life itself; must this Friend be ever a stranger to Nannette? Kitty knew not how to tell her darling about the great God who made her. She could not touch her young heart with the story of the Saviour's love.

Much, very much Kitty had thought on this subject. Often she had stolen to the bedside of her sleeping child, and had commended her to the care of the Saviour, who loves the little ones, sure

that this afflicted lamb would be his especial care.

"I will make her obedient and gentle, and in this she will keep God's law. I will teach her to fold her little hands while I pray for her. I will try to set her the example of what a Christian ought to be, and perhaps by and by God will show me some better way of letting her know about Him."

Slowly Kitty had come to these conclusions; and although it was not exactly in these words that she expressed them to herself, this was their substance. Who could doubt that, under such training, the little mute would become attractive in other eyes than those of her fond mother.

Nannette proved a handy little lassie, and it was wonderful how soon she became a help in the humble duties of the cottage; and Ben and Kitty often had

occasion to say that their unfortunate child gave them far less sorrow than they might have had to bear from a saucy talker or a deceitful eavesdropper.

Ten years had come and gone, with their cold and snow, their sunshine and flowers, since Nannette was a babe in the cradle, and still Bounce was her chosen friend and play-fellow. They had been having a nice gambol together one fine summer day, and all in a heat Nannette had seated herself beneath a great tree. Bounce established himself beside her, and she threw her arm round his neck, and pressed his rough cheek to hers as tenderly as if he had been a human friend. A friend indeed he had been to her these many years, and from many a danger he had saved her. Ben and Kitty were never uneasy about the child if Bounce was with her; for no one could harm the helpless little one while

the dog's fierce bark and strong teeth were at her service.

Now he began to utter a low growl as the sound of horses' hoofs was heard in the distance; and when the mounted rider came in sight of his young mistress, Bounce was standing at her side, his feet on her dress, and his whole air proclaiming that he was her protector.

"How many miles is it to the next town, my little girl?" said the stranger, as he paused in front of Nannette.

Nannette of course made no reply, and the stranger repeated his question somewhat more authoritatively than at first. Bounce gave a low growl, and Nannette placed her fingers in her ears, shaking her head at the same time by way of letting the new-comer know that she was deaf.

The gentleman was no adept in the language of signs, and he quite misunderstood her meaning.

"You stop your ears, and wont hear my question, eh, you saucy little thing," he said. "Then I must get down and see if there is any body older and more civil in the house to tell me what I want to know."

Bounce did not like the expression of the stranger's face as he looked at his little mistress, and seeing him dismounting with a heavy riding-whip in his hand, he sprang towards him with a threatening bark.

The gentleman was irritated, and with a sudden movement he struck at Bounce with the heavy whip and hit him on one of his forelegs. There was a long miserable howl from Bounce as he retreated slightly and took his place directly in front of his mistress, as if willing to die in her defence, but not anxious to risk another such blow unnecessarily.

Nannette gave a cry, a strange, unnat-

ural cry of distress, and her tears fell fast as she strove to take the poor wounded paw in her hand. Bounce would not allow this, though he was quivering all over with pain; he plainly thought the battle not yet done.

Nannette's peculiar cry had brought her mother in a moment to her side, for the child was but under the tree that overshadowed the wayside spring near the cottage.

"Nannette, dear," exclaimed Kitty, as she ran to her darling, hardly noticing the presence of the stranger. Nannette showed her mother the suffering paw of her spirited friend, and then her features expressed horror and dislike as she pointed towards the author of the misfortune.

Kitty turned to look at the stranger, and saw a rather stout, middle-aged gentleman, whose round face was either

very much heated or flushed with recent anger.

"I struck pretty hard, I believe," he said, apologetically; "but the child put her fingers in her ears to keep from hearing my question, and the dog sprang at me as if he were going to eat me up."

"She 's quite deaf, my Nannette. She can't speak or hear," said Kitty, simply. "That was what she wanted to tell you. The dog is as kind as a lamb, only when he thinks some one is going to hurt her, and then he 's just like a lion, and almost as strong."

"A good, brave fellow," said the stranger, much softened. "He 's worth his weight in gold. I 'm sorry I hit him so hard; but his fangs looked ugly, as he let me have the benefit of a full sight of them. I am tired out with riding over these rough roads. Is not there a public-

house somewhere near, where I could get dinner and rest a while?"

"There 's no tavern near us, I 'm thankful to say. It 's the taverns that ruin the men," said Kitty quickly; "but if you 'll come in a bit, I can give you bread and butter, and either sweet milk or cold water, which ever suits you best."

Nannette wondered much when she saw her mother taking the stranger within the cottage, while her own soul was boiling over with dislike to him.

A tidy place was that small cottage, and the stranger stopped to wipe his feet on the braided mat at the door before he stepped on the clean, scoured floor. He could not tell whether his appetite was unusual, but it seemed to him he had never tasted such bread and milk in the world, and long he lingered over them, while Kitty was willingly led on to talk

of Nannette and Bounce. "Now for a taste of that cold water," he said at length, as he drew back from the white table.

Kitty stepped to the door with a small bucket in her hand, and made a sign to Nannette to fill it at the spring.

Nannette came unwillingly; she did not wish to do any thing for the stranger, not she. Bounce seemed much of her opinion, for he growled as he limped along beside his mistress.

Here was an opportunity for teaching the child forgiveness, and Kitty was determined to make use of it. She drew Nannette into the cottage, and taking her up to the stranger, signified to her by rude signs that her mother felt kindly to him, and she must do so too.

Nannette hung her head for a moment, but Kitty's face looked loving, yet decided. There was an evident struggle

in the child's mind, and then she suddenly put up her mouth to be kissed by the stranger. Tenderly he kissed her, tenderly as if she had been his own child. The poor mute's forgiveness touched his heart, and he warmed with love towards her.

Mr. Haviland's hasty temper often made him appear worse than he really was. He was heartily sorry for his moment of passion, and when he shortly afterwards left Kitty Kuhn's cottage, it was with the kindliest feelings towards its inmates.

CHAPTER III.

AN OFFER.

Mr. Haviland's journey might, in our time, have been taken between breakfast and dinner; but there were no swift-moving cars then to bear him on his way. He and his good horse were two long, weary days on that rough road, before they came to their place of destination. It was not with much pleasure that the stout gentleman looked forward to the return trip, which he was called on to take when a week was over. Yet there was one bright spot on that homeward path: he should stop at Kuhn's cottage, and have another peep at his little deaf and dumb friend, who had been much in his mind since they parted.

When Mr. Haviland for the second time fastened his horse under the oak by the spring, Nannette was not at her favorite seat among its roots.

Bounce, however, was soon aware of his approach, and gave a warning bark, which saved the stranger the trouble of knocking at the door.

There was a quick sound of a chair moving on the bare floor, and in another moment Kitty herself stood on the threshold to bid the visitor welcome.

He had not come to tax her hospitality this time, though the white bread on the table looked very tempting, and Ben, who was at his dinner, seconded Kitty's invitation to the gentleman to share their humble meal.

Nannette took the tumbler of milk beside her own plate, and carried it to the stranger, while her open, pleasant countenance was turned first towards

him and then towards her mother for approval.

Kitty nodded pleasantly, and Nannette was satisfied, though Mr. Haviland with a wave of his hand refused the proffered refreshment.

Nannette quietly sat down to enjoy it herself, while Mr. Haviland said, "I did not come to take my dinner here to-day. I took care to have my luncheon with me this time. I come on business now. This, I suppose, is the man of the house," and he looked at Ben.

"Yes; Ben Kuhn, my husband," was Kitty's prompt reply.

Kitty dropped a courtesy of respect to Mr. Haviland as she spoke; but the glance with which she favored Ben at the same time was far more complimentary. There was such a mingling of pride and affection in it as proved that he was a husband she would not be

ashamed to own even to the king himself.

"Well then, Ben," continued Mr. Haviland, "I suppose my business must be transacted with you. I want to buy your dog. I am willing to pay handsomely for him; and to cut the matter short, I offer you fifty dollars for him. I am not *giving* you the money; the dog is fully worth the price, and would be especially so to me."

Kitty's face had assumed a look of alarm while the stranger was speaking; but as he named the price he offered, an anxious doubt seemed to be troubling her mind.

Fifty dollars! Such a sum as that in clear money had never been seen in Ben Kuhn's cottage. Ben knew that, and it only took a second for a train of imaginary comforts to sweep through his mind as the sure followers of such a golden

treasure. Very little effect had this vision upon honest Ben Kuhn, and his answer was prompt and decided.

"The dog is not mine, sir. My old master's son left him with me when he went over the water, and I promised to take care of him until he came back, no matter how long that should be. Bounce was only a pup then, for it was eleven years ago; and I can't say truly whether Master John is living or not. I don't know either whether he could find me if he should come back, for we moved out here when our Nannette was a mere baby. Anyhow, it shall never be said, Ben Kuhn took money for what was not his own."

While her husband was speaking, Kitty's face had been marked by changing expressions. Her first impression at this unthought-of mode of settling the question was succeeded by such a sense

of the honesty of her good husband, as made her stand upright and look at him with proud satisfaction.

"You are an honest man," said Mr. Haviland, "and I like you for it; and yet I had set my heart on the dog. I have a little girl at home about the age, I should think, of your child. I could have paid almost any sum to have had such a protector as your Bounce seems to be for a child he fancies."

"Is she deaf and dumb too?" asked Kitty sympathetically

It was a simple question, but it made the father's heart thrill as he quickly responded, "No; thank God, my little Bess has no such misfortunes. You should hear her singing wherever she goes, the life of the house."

"I think she hardly needs Bounce as much as our poor Nannette does," said Kitty quickly.

"You are right, you are right," said Mr. Haviland, half ashamed of himself for the offer he had made; and yet it had not been wholly a selfish proposition. He had wanted to do something for the little mute, and it had struck his mind that by purchasing the dog he could throw money into her parents' hands, which they would well know how to spend.

Nannette had been an eager observer of the conversation, but had no idea of its subject; yet when Mr. Haviland rode away, and Kitty threw her arm around Bounce's rough neck and gave him a tender caress, Nannette heartily joined her.

In this way they could understand each other. They both loved Bounce, and would not have parted with him without a bitter struggle.

As for Ben Kuhn, he went whistling

off to the woods, with his axe on his shoulder. He had but done his duty, and perhaps the fifty dollars or the stranger might not cross his mind for many a day.

CHAPTER IV.

BESSIE.

BESSIE HAVILAND was surely neither deaf nor dumb. Her quick ear was the first to catch the sound of her father's returning footsteps, and her voice was the one to bid him welcome.

Never had the sound, "Dear father," seemed as precious to Mr. Haviland as at this moment. Kitty's simple question was still ringing in his ears. What a cause for gratitude had ever escaped his notice! *His* only child was marred by no blemish; that was indeed a mercy.

Again and again he looked at her beaming, expressive face, as she sat at the supper-table that evening, and his heart seemed doubly full of love to his darling. At length he said, "I meant to have brought you a beautiful present,

Bessie: a Dalmatian coach-dog, the most sagacious animal I ever saw in my life."

"What color was he? Oh, I should have so liked to have him," said Bessie, eagerly.

"He was white, with black spots and a few brown dashes. I will tell you all about him," said Mr. Haviland. Then followed a full account of his visits to the cottage of the Kuhns.

Bessie's interest in the dog was soon lost in her absorbing desire to hear more and more about Nannette. Her father had to describe the poor mute again and again, and to show her every gesture.

"Poor girl," exclaimed Bessie; "I am glad you could not get the dog for me. And so her mother asked if I was deaf and dumb."

Bessie's face grew thoughtful as she spoke. There was no true Christian

friend at hand just then to prompt the child's softened heart to gratitude to her merciful heavenly Father. Alas, Bessie's parents were keeping the choicest treasure from their only darling. They had surrounded her with every comfort, and made her life happy by their fond affection; but they had never taught her to love the best, the almighty Friend. Her prayers she repeated morning and evening, and Sunday after Sunday she was regularly at church; but no one spoke to her of the Saviour as ever at her side, ready to help her feeblest effort to do right, and gently lead her in the path to heaven.

Mr. and Mrs. Haviland had enjoyed long years of prosperity; the world was to them a pleasant place, and they thought but little of the eternity towards which they were certainly hurrying.

Happily Bessie was naturally warm-

hearted and sunny-tempered, and had not yet been rendered wholly selfish by the indulgence to which she had been accustomed. She was full of love to her parents, but she knew nothing of sacrificing her pleasure for others, or of making efforts to increase the happiness of those around her, and living to please the Saviour.

A new idea had now been started in her mind, a new impression had been made upon her. The contrast between the poor mute in the way-side cottage and herself, surrounded by every comfort and blessed with so many privileges, was forcibly thrust upon her young heart.

Again she repeated, "I am glad I did not have the dog. Poor Nannette."

That evening Bessie was very busy. She had ransacked her library until she had found the book she sought. Then she laid it open on the table before her,

and diligently she tried to place her hands in the pōsitions represented in the engravings in the book.

"What is my Bessie doing?" said her father, looking up suddenly from his newspaper.

"I am trying to learn the deaf and dumb alphabet. See here, father, it shows in my book how they teach the deaf and dumb to talk."

"I think your little tongue talks fast enough," said the father, looking over her book with a smile.

"Yes," said Bessie soberly; "but I mean to learn how to talk with my fingers, and then if I ever see Nannette, or any deaf and dumb people, I'll teach them. It must be dreadful not to be able to talk."

"I am afraid you would make a very poor teacher; you are not quite steady enough for that. Would you like to see

the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in our own city? I am sure it would interest you."

The father thought but of giving his child pleasure; and his end seemed accomplished, for Bessie's face was perfectly beaming at the proposal.

The visit to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum took place the next day, and a very interesting visit it was.

Bessie was unusually thoughtful all the way home, and when at last she sat by her father's side in their own parlor, she said, "Father, will you do something for me? Will you have Nannette go to the Asylum, to learn to read and write? Will you, father? Say, please; will you?"

"How shall we get the little girl, clear off in the woods, and bring her here, my child?" he replied.

"Oh, you can go in the carriage, and bring her away yourself," said Bessie eagerly.

"The roads are so bad that the poor carriage would be all racked to pieces before I was half way there," said Mr. Haviland, still smiling.

"O father, you are just teasing me. You know you could get a strong wagon, and go in it, if you pleased," said Bessie, a little pettishly.

"What do you say to Bessie's plan, wife?" said Mr. Haviland, turning towards his lady.

Mrs. Haviland was one of those easy, good-natured people for whom it is always more natural to say "Yes," than "No;" and now she looked up pleasantly, and only answered,

"Do as you please, Mr. Haviland."

"I confess I take an uncommon interest in the child," continued the husband. "I rather like Bessie's plan."

"O father," exclaimed Bessie, clapping her hands, "you will; you will!"

CHAPTER V.

A YOUNG TRAVELLER.

A few weeks after the occurrences related in our last chapter, Mr. Haviland was once more on the road to Ben Kuhn's cottage. No letter had preceded him, to tell of his coming. Mr. Haviland doubted whether the humble people ever thought enough of receiving letters, to go to the post-office twenty miles distant for them; nor was he sure they could read such a document if it should fall into their hands. So it chanced that he was an unlooked-for guest when he appeared at Ben Kuhn's door.

The visitor was fortunate enough to find all the family at home. Frankly and promptly he stated his errand, clearly

explaining the advantages that would result to Nannette from the course he proposed.

The honest couple listened in wondering silence. Ben was the first to reply.

"She ought to go, sir. I see it plainly. Kitty, we must part with the child."

Kitty's face was suddenly muffled in her apron, and her tears fell fast. Nannette sprang to her side, and throwing her arms round her neck, strove by kind caresses to comfort her.

"You are but a child yourself, Kitty, or you would n't take on so," said Ben bluntly. "There 's many a mother has to see her lassie put out to service younger than our Nannette. We ought n't to stand in the child's way."

Kitty's arm was tight about Nannette. How could she spare her? Impossible! Then came a whisper at the mother's heart: "If Nannette could learn

to talk and read, what should keep her from the knowledge of God, of whom she could have as yet but a dim idea? Was not this an answer to the prayers that had been daily offered, that Christ, the friend of the unfortunate, would teach this poor afflicted child to know and love him?"

Kitty's resolution was taken at once. "You are right, Ben," she said; "we ought not to keep our child from a way of learning to read the word of God, and of praying to him straight out of her heart. She must go."

Kitty at once busied herself in collecting together Nannette's scanty wardrobe, and in making her tidy for the journey.

When the child was equipped in her calico dress and sun-bonnet, she made signs for her mother to get ready too. Kitty shook her head, and could not keep the tears from her eyes. Ben kiss-

ed his little daughter, and motioned to her to take the empty seat in the wagon beside Mr. Haviland.

But for Nannette's years of trained obedience, there would have been now an open rebellion. She hesitated, and stood still. Ben took her gently by the arm, and Kitty tenderly assisted her on the other side. They both looked full of love to her, she could read that in their countenances; but as plainly could she understand their command to her to leave them.

The docile spirit triumphed, and Nannette allowed herself to be placed beside Mr. Haviland. Her face was very sorrowful, and a strange moan of distress escaped her.

There was an angry bark from the small wood-room of the cottage, and a fierce scratching at the tightly fastened door. Nannette's head dropped upon

her hands, and the wheels rolled rapidly away. A long, long howl went up from the imprisoned Bounce. It was well for Nannette that she could not hear her playfellow's sad farewell.

"It's all right, Kitty," said Ben, as he went off to the woods.

Ah, Ben could not fully know what Kitty must suffer in so parting with her child.

Happy was it for the mother that she knew where to go in her trouble. There was an Eye that could watch Nannette by the wayside and in her new home. There was a Hand that could protect her from every danger. Very earnestly Kitty prayed to this almighty Protector, and by degrees peace stole over her soul.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ASYLUM.

NANNETTE was but a child, and the griefs of youth are easily soothed. The motion of the wagon was pleasant to her, the day was bright, and the woods were full of living creatures to be startled by the approach of the travellers. Before long, Mr. Haviland found his companion jogging him to look at the squirrels hopping among the branches, or the woodpeckers shaking their busy heads on the tall bare trunks.

Mr. Haviland had provided himself with a powerful argument in his favor, in the shape of a certain three-cornered paper bag, containing nuts and candies; and then too there was the luncheon-bas-

ket under the seat, a great pacifier in its way.

So it happened that before the spires of the distant city were to be seen, glowing with the brightness of the setting sun, Nannette had learned to look upon her companion as a friend.

In front of a large frame-building Mr. Haviland stopped, and taking Nannette by the hand, he ascended the broad steps. Full of wonder and admiration she looked about her as they were ushered into a parlor and welcomed by a gentleman of a calm and kindly countenance. After a short conversation with the stranger, Mr. Haviland took his hat and put out his hand to say good-by to Nannette.

Her own bonnet had been laid aside, and at once she understood that Mr. Haviland was to leave her. With a sudden scream she clung to him. It was by force alone that Nannette was borne

away, and Mr. Haviland was left at liberty to seek his own home.

Finding resistance useless, Nannette allowed herself to be led up a long flight of stairs, and still another, until she reached a large room, where a number of young girls were busy making a hasty toilet before going to supper. On each side of the room were rows of small white-covered beds, each having its own wash-stand and dressing apparatus beside it.

Nannette watched her new companions closely. Not a lip was stirring, though by their animated gestures it was plain they were communicating with each other.

She was perfectly quiet for a few minutes, and then a cry of joy burst from her; and breaking away from her guide, she threw her arms around the nearest of the young girls, and vainly strove to

express her pleasure at the truth she had guessed.

These busy, happy-looking girls were deaf and dumb, like herself. This was a thought full of comfort to poor Nannette.

CHAPTER VII.

BESSIE'S PETITION.

We pass over Nannette's first few days at her new home. It was a joy to the child to associate with young people of her own age, and there was a strange pleasure to her in the knowledge that her companions were mutes like herself. Their expressive gestures she easily understood, and already she was coming on rapidly in the language of natural signs, but as yet of other signs she knew nothing. To letters, spelling, and books she had not yet been introduced.

Night and morning Nannette knelt as she had been taught, and reverently folded her hands. This was for her but an act of obedience to her earthly parent; her great Father in heaven was still to

her a stranger. Yet who can doubt that he looked lovingly down on the dutiful child, and gave her the blessing she was unconsciously asking?

Nannette had borne up bravely for three days and nights, though often a yearning to see her distant mother was thrilling at her heart. The fourth day had come, and for some unknown reason Nannette's courage seemed suddenly to give way. The faces around her all looked strange to her; the rows of white beds were desolate in her eyes, and she longed for the red calico stars of the counterpane at home; she wanted to see the inside of her mother's cottage, and to feel that mother's arms about her.

Breakfast was over, and Nannette had crept up to the dormitory or sleeping room alone. The tears she had stemmed back while in company now burst forth, and she sobbed aloud. There was no

one near to comfort her; she was almost in despair. Suddenly she remembered what she had seen her mother do when in trouble, and how she had observed her face calmed by such a resource. It was but imitation, a forlorn hope, when Nannette fell on her knees and hid her weeping face in her own little bed.

So she sobbed her grief away, and was already drying her tears, when a friendly hand was laid on her shoulder.

One of the teachers of the institution had sought for the young stranger, and had traced her to her retreat, and now she signified to her that she must put on her bonnet and make ready for a walk. The bonnet that was prepared for her was simple, a neat straw "shaker;" but to Nannette it was extremely pretty, and with childish pleasure she put it on, quite forgetful of her swollen face and tear-marked eyes.

Two by two walked out the pupils of the asylum, and Nannette in the midst of the throng, curiously interested in all she saw.

But in the midst of her enjoyment, passengers, carriages, and even shop-windows were suddenly forgotten by our little friend. An object on the opposite side of the street had attracted her attention. She struggled to get free from the hand of the teacher who was at her side. Her efforts and the commotion thus excited answered her purpose.

The large spotted dog which was straying along, carefully looking at every person he met, made a few sudden bounds, which brought him to Nannette.

What a meeting that was! The joy of poor Bounce hardly knew how to express itself. The creature seemed absolutely wild with delight, while Nan-

nette's gestures and caresses were almost as strange and violent.

The rest of the party might go on in pairs, but it was plain that Bounce had determined that three should walk together in the place where Nannette was, and the third party should be himself.

Nannette's heart was brimful of joy, and very lightly she moved along the paved street, skipping as cheerily as if she was in the woods near her father's cottage.

The walk was over all too soon, and to Nannette's horror her dear companion was forbidden to enter the house which was now her home. In vain she pleaded in expressive signs with the teacher who had the charge of her. The idea of admitting a dog into the institution seemed to be considered monstrous and unheard of.

Bounce had not come so far to be

easily discomfited. Through a crack in his prison-house his watchful eye had seen his mistress borne away by Mr. Haviland; and no sooner was he released at evening than he set off to follow her, guided by his unerring scent. Mr. Haviland's horse he found no difficulty in tracing along the road, even in the darkness of night; but as morning dawned, he lost all signs of his footsteps among the trodden ways of the city. Three days Bounce had wandered about seeking his treasure; now, when he was wan and weary, he had found her, and he would not forsake her. He would guard the house that held her, though he might not lie at her side and look kindly up into her face.

Nannette had a sorrowful morning indeed, and the lady who attempted to teach her some of the finger signs had a most inattentive pupil.

From the school-room Nannette went to the dinner-table, not to eat, but to store in her apron the meat that was put on her plate. She little doubted that she should find Bounce waiting outside the barred gate. She knew he would not leave her.

Yes, there was faithful Bounce lying on the sidewalk, and looking wistfully down the path along which his mistress had disappeared. At the sight of her, his satisfaction broke forth in a joyous bark. The poor fellow was hungry, that was plain enough. How he did relish the morsels with which Nannette fed him through the bars! How she longed to open the gate and let him in, just for one moment.

Nannette had been trained to obedience, and she would not now disobey, though the temptation was strong. No, she would stroke poor Bounce as best

she could, and pat him so lovingly; he should feel that she at least would be glad to give him a welcome into her new home.

There were two parties watching this little scene, though Nannette thought she was quite unobserved.

The Principal of the institution was looking at Nannette from the window of his study, and his heart yearned towards the poor young stranger who was so willingly giving her own dinner to her humble friend.

On the steps of the asylum too stood a gentleman and his daughter; and as they waited for the bell to be answered, they had a sight of what was going on at the gate.

"It is Bounce, the very dog I wanted for you, Bessie," exclaimed Mr. Haviland; "and that is Nannette herself who is feeding him."

"Is she really deaf and dumb?" said Bessie, as the tears rushed to her eyes. Nannette did look very sweetly, as with her sun-bonnet thrown back she leaned forward to pat her favorite, and to smile on him what she would have wished to say. Could it be that she was deaf and dumb?

A servant opened the door, and Mr. Haviland made haste to say, "I think that is the little girl we wish to see," pointing at the same time to Nannette.

"Poor child!" exclaimed the Irish girl compassionately, "she 's about wild afther the dog. I make no doubt he 's been afther following her from distant parts. The cratur is worn down; but you could n't get him away from that gate if you was to offer him a leg of mutton; nor she wont let him in neither on the sly. I never saw the beat of her.

She ought to have him, the poor little lone thing."

"Indeed she ought," said Bessie quickly. Mr. Haviland was shown into the parlor, and the Principal soon came to give him a greeting. Nannette was sent for, and most unwillingly she turned from Bounce; yet she obeyed the summons.

It seemed to Nannette like meeting an old friend to see Mr. Haviland among those strange faces. He knew her mother; he had been at her home. Perhaps he could help her about Bounce. With a sudden impulse Nannette began to caper about, to imitate the dog in her best style; and then followed such a pleading look and such a winning earnestness, as she took Mr. Haviland's hand, that she could not be misunderstood.

Mr. Haviland smiled affectionately

upon the child, and nodded his head, meaning that he would do all he could for her; and then he drew her attention to his daughter.

Bessie's eager eyes were full of interest; she did not look like the spoiled child of luxury, as she gave both her hands to poor Nannette.

"Here is a doll I brought for you; you may have it for your own," said Bessie, talking in her rapid way, and then blushing as she remembered that Nannette could not hear.

Nannette's ears were closed, but her eyes were open, and she understood the look and gesture, and smiled and courtesied her thanks, as her mother had taught her.

Ah, Kitty Kuhn had laid well the foundation of Christian education when she had trained Nannette to such loving, faithful obedience.

"Please, sir, may n't Nannette have her dog here with her?" said Bessie, suddenly turning to the Principal.

"The poor creature has no doubt followed her all the way from her home, though they locked him up when we started. He 's a noble dog," said Mr. Haviland.

"We never let our pupils bring pets with them," said the Principal doubtfully.

"Nannette is so little, to be away from home. Look, she is only as tall as I am, and all alone here, and deaf and dumb too," pleaded Bessie, who was afraid of no one when she had a purpose to gain.

Nannette gazed at her eagerly. Could it be that the little stranger was urging the petition she had most at heart?

Mr. Haviland in a few words told all he knew of the dog; and declared it his opinion, that in the institution Bounce would prove a valuable guard, not to

speak of the innocent pleasure that would be afforded to the child. The Principal listened to the pleadings of his own heart, when thus seconded from without.

"Miss Haviland," he said, "I think Nannette deserves this reward for her obedience. I watched her, and when she need but have touched the latch of the gate for a moment to have had her pet by her side, she resisted the temptation. She is a good, faithful child, and shames many a more favored little one."

Bessie's conscience smote her quickly; she feared under such circumstances she should have behaved less worthily than the mute. Such thoughts were not welcome, and she turned quickly from them to the more agreeable subject.

"She may have him! You give your consent, sir!" she exclaimed.

"I do most heartily," said the Principal.

"May I tell her? Do let me," said Bessie eagerly.

"If you can!" was the Principal's smiling answer.

Bessie took Nannette by the hand, while Mr. Haviland and the Principal followed. Bessie was out the street door in a moment, and soon she stood on the sidewalk with Nannette and the faithful Bounce. Bessie put Nannette's hand in the dog's collar, then opening wide the gate, she entered, and beckoned to Nannette to follow.

Nannette gave a quick look of inquiry towards the gentleman whom she already understood to be a sort of a king on those premises. The Principal bowed his consent, and Nannette, overjoyed, led Bounce within the enclosure, and then released her hand from his collar.

Bounce seemed to feel the importance of the occasion, for he forthwith proceed-

ed to show off his tricks, as if to prove how valuable an addition he was to be to the family. He picked up Mr. Haviland's pocket handkerchief for him, and brought it to him at once. He stood on his hind legs and pretended to be asleep, until at last he nodded and fell over. He tossed up a stick in the air, and caught it in his mouth six times in succession, while Nannette looked on with an innocent glee that was truly contagious.

That was a happy little scene, and it had many sympathizing spectators from the windows above.

When the first burst of joy was over, Nannette tried to express her grateful thanks for the privilege granted her, and to Bessie particularly her heart seemed overflowing with love.

Bessie had been accustomed to kind and flattering attentions all her life; but

there was something particularly gratifying to her in Nannette's affectionate looks and gestures. A strong bond was forming between them, a new pleasure was being opened for Mr. Haviland's petted child. For the first time Bessie was tasting the happiness of ministering to the unfortunate.

When we take the first right step, however tremblingly and in the dark, we know not what bright pathway may open before us. Who can tell the blessing that may follow one effort for the sorrowful children of earth, who are the Saviour's peculiar care?

It was with real regret that Nannette parted with her new friend; but Bounce was still at her side, and a gambol with her dear old companion that afternoon made her almost forget that she was far away from her own home.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VISIT.

A COMFORTABLE carriage had stopped at the door of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, and a note had been handed by the coachman to the Principal of the institution.

Soon Nannette had been neatly dressed, and was led out to the carriage. The Principal signified to her that he wished her to get in, and yet it was plain that he was not prepared to follow her.

Nannette looked up in his face. It was kind and gentle. She knew she could trust him.

With no further hesitation she entered the carriage, the door was closed, and she was driven away, she knew not whither.

Nannette was daily learning lessons of love, trust, and obedience. God had placed her in a school where she could develop the virtues that are dearest to him.

No fears distressed the little girl as she was borne rapidly along the wide streets; the Principal's parting look was in her memory, and her confidence was unshaken.

Before a pleasant mansion the carriage stopped. Bright young eyes were on the look-out for the visitor, and a glad young friend was ready to bid her welcome.

Nannette was overjoyed when she saw Bessie's beaming countenance, and most willingly she allowed herself to be led into the house. It was easy for her to understand that the tall lady in the glistening silk dress was Bessie's mother. There were the same smooth round cheeks, the same broad forehead and

prettily cut chin, that marked the only daughter. Yet there was more warmth in Bessie's face; she had something of her father's hasty spirit to contend with, and an energy of character that often made her more than a match for her calm and ease-loving mother.

Mrs. Haviland moved across the room, her dress sweeping the floor, and her head held high, with a dignity that would have seemed like pride, but for the languor that pervaded her whole person. Yet her welcome to the poor little mute was kind, though short. It was but a smile and a shake of the hand, and then she motioned the little girls away, while she prepared to receive some visitors who were at the door.

To Nannette, Mrs. Haviland seemed a vision of elegance and beauty; the simple child had yet to learn that the fairest forms do not always hide the purest

hearts, nor the most luxurious homes the most grateful inmates.

Bessie led Nannette up stairs; but hardly had the guest laid aside her bonnet and shawl, when the young hostess darted away to question the servant as to the strangers whom her mother had just received.

"A gentleman and lady, miss; a tall gentleman—Mr. Fearing, I think your mamma called him," was the waiter's reply.

"I must go down; I want to see them," said Bessie; and hastily arranging her hair, she hurried down stairs, leaving Nannette alone. Nannette looked about her. She needed no entertainer; it was enough for her to observe each article of furniture, to examine the fine engravings on the walls, and the beautiful adornments of the mantelpiece and toilet-table. Very gently she walked round the room,

not once laying a meddlesome finger on what she so much admired. She too well remembered her mother's timely punishment of such naughty ways to indulge in them now.

Nannette was in a most happy mood when Bessie came slowly, very slowly up stairs.

Nannette ran to meet her, to try by her poor signs to show the pleasure she was enjoying; but one look at Bessie's face put all such thoughts out of her mind. A wonderful transformation had been wrought there during the few moments of her absence. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were full of tears, while there was a look of determined rebellion in every cross wrinkle that marred her features.

Nannette stood still for a moment, as if doubtful what to do.

"Mother would not let me stay. It is

a shame," said Bessie, giving vent to her ill-humor in words, though she was well aware that her companion could not hear them. "I wont be treated so;" and her small foot stamped passionately as she spoke.

Nannette knew very well what it was to be tormented with sudden anger, and she as well remembered how her mother had dealt with her on such occasions. It suddenly struck her to try the same experiment with Bessie. Taking her quickly by the hand, she led her to the bedside. Bessie obeyed out of curiosity. Nannette knelt down, and motioning to Bessie to hide her face, the poor mute folded her hands, and looked up with the air of deep supplication which she had so often seen on her mother's earnest features.

Bessie was awed and touched. Like lightning passed the thought through her

mind, "I am not fit to speak to God, feeling as I do." A new wish to be better took the place of her momentary anger; and when Nannette motioned to her to rise, she was ready to receive the loving kiss which Nannette bestowed upon her, in exact imitation of Kitty's own manner.

Bessie felt drawn anew towards Nannette, and that first visit was long remembered by them both. To Nannette it was a true holiday.

Bessie's anger was as short-lived as it was sudden, and her companion soon forgot the painful scene in the enjoyment that followed. Dolls and playthings, picture-books and working implements were shown in turn; and so hearty was Nannette's pleasure and admiration, that it was joy enough for Bessie to watch her changing expressions and amusing gestures.

The carriage was an unwelcome sight to both of the children when it came to bear Nannette back to the Asylum; but she had a submissive spirit, and the day closed for her with but little shadow over its sunshine.

CHAPTER IX.

SEEING WONDERS.

Again and again Nannette watched the carriages that stopped at the Asylum; again and again her heart was full of hope, when she was suddenly summoned to the parlor. The months went by, yet Nannette saw neither Mr. Haviland nor Bessie. New thoughts were passing in a bright stream through Nannette's mind, and yet these friends were not forgotten. They still had a precious place in her memory, and on Bessie particularly she loved to dwell.

Two years had passed away since Nannette's pleasant visit to Bessie in her home. Bessie meanwhile had been laying up subjects for conversation on which her busy tongue would love to dwell all

the days of her life. The wonders of the Old World had been laid open to her.

With her father, Bessie had stood on the banks of the river where Moses lay, a hidden treasure; the Pyramids had towered like mountains before her astonished eyes; in the Vale of Chamouni she had watched with her mother a venturous party winding up the frozen sides of awful Mont Blanc; gay Paris had displayed to her its brilliant charms and scenes of historic interest; England too the travellers had explored, from the chalk cliffs of Dover even to the banks of the Tweed.

Wonderful, beautiful, majestic sights had Bessie seen: the monuments that men have raised, the pictures that genius has painted; the beautiful earth, now glittering with many lakes, now towering in snow-clad mountains.

Well worth all that weary journeying were the scenes that the travellers had stored in their memories; yet Nannette, in her quiet life at the Asylum, had had her eyes opened to more wonderful beauties, to more enduring pictures of loveliness. Bessie had but looked on the charms of earth; Nannette had caught her first glimpse of heaven. The Bible was no longer to her a sealed book. She too could read of the Saviour, who made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, and took the little children in his arms and blessed them. The glory of that heaven whose beauty no eye hath seen, was laid up in store for her. Humbly she had asked to have her name written in the Lamb's book of life. She doubted not the faithful Promiser, but believed that even poor Nannette would one day wear the white robes purchased by Christ's blood for the true children of God.

It was to Nannette as if a veil had been removed from her dear mother's daily life, and now she saw and knew her. She understood the secret spring which prompted that dear mother's every act; she knew the well of waters whence she drew her love and cheerfulness.

It was a happy time at the cottage when Nannette made her first visit home; but its chief joy was at the moment when the mother and daughter knelt side by side once more. To Nannette it seemed as though the blessing of all those ill-understood prayers of her childhood was falling upon her, the blessing her mother had so continually and fervently called down on her unconscious head.

Now from their hearts, if not from their lips, their prayer and praise rose together as sweet incense to their Father in heaven.

Nannette had gone forth from her

home at her mother's command, knowing naught of the future, little guessing the joys that were to spring from this painful separation.

She had but the same lesson to learn anew. She had but to love and trust her heavenly Father as she had loved and trusted her earthly parents, and all would be well. She needed but one motto: "This is the will of my Saviour; I must do it." To his love and mercy she could leave her future. She could follow wherever He led her, even if it were through the valley of the shadow of death, sure that the end would be joy and peace.

CHAPTER X.

REUNION.

NANNETTE had returned to the Asylum for the remaining half year for which Mr. Haviland in his generous care had insured her stay.

She had a pleasant surprise one morning, when the not yet forgotten carriage appeared at the door. It was not empty now; Bessie was looking out eagerly to catch the first glimpse of Nannette.

There was a strange joy in that meeting. Each had a reason for counting the other among the dearest of earthly friends, and the most casual observer could not fail to notice the heartiness of their greeting.

Side by side in the parlor of the Asy-

lum they sat for a moment hand in hand looking each other earnestly in the face. There were changes in both, other changes than are wrought by time alone. The Bessie of Nannette's faithful, loving memory was now taller and more womanly, but there was a softened gentleness in her look and manner that was a great beautifier. To Nannette there had come an added brightness, a beaming glance of joy, that was partly the result of her quickened mind, and partly of that new life and new hope in Christ which were now the very springs of her existence.

Nannette's ever-ready slate was in her hand; she took her pencil and wrote rapidly,

"I know you. You are Miss Bessie Haviland. I did not forget you. You did a great deal for me. The Principal told me all about it. I thank you very much. I will always love you. *I know*

about the Lord Jesus. I shall go to heaven too."

Nannette watched Bessie's face as she read the written words, and the speaking countenance of the mute attested the truth of the grateful affection she professed. But she looked in vain for the bright glance of joy which she expected to see when Bessie should read her closing words.

"I shall go to heaven *too*," Bessie mentally repeated. Ah, Bessie was not as sure of her admission into the eternal home as was her silent companion. Bessie had begun, it is true, a sort of a new life, a life of struggle with her faults, and her efforts had not been wholly in vain; but as yet she did not understand her need of a new heart, of the Holy Spirit's aid, of reliance on the Saviour alone for deliverance from sin. Heaven seemed to her a dim, uncertain place, which it

was possible she should never see. Nannette's simple act during her single visit at Mr. Haviland's had been to Bessie a continual prompter and inspirer of better things. Many a time, when excited and unhappy, she had thrown herself upon her knees, and the remembrance that she was in the presence of God had calmed her troubled spirit. By degrees she went further, and prayers for forgiveness and help to do right were tremblingly uttered; such prayers prompted to more efforts, and such efforts to more prayer.

Thus Bessie was trying to do right, but without the cheering sense of forgiveness, or the blessed hope of the eternal home where sin and sorrow shall be known no more. Nannette's confident words and her look of joy made Bessie doubly sensible of the uncertainty of her own future, and the little satisfaction her religion had as yet been to her.

"What makes you sorry?" wrote Nannette, while Bessie was for a moment lost in thought.

Bessie was by nature frank, and she replied at once, "I am very glad to see you. I have thought very often of you and the time you made me kneel down by the bed when I was angry. I try not to be angry now, but I am not, like you, sure I shall go to heaven."

"Why not?" was Nannette's short reply, while her face was full of earnest, prayerful interest.

"I don't think I am good enough. I am afraid I never can be," was Bessie's answer.

Nannette looked reverently upward for a moment, and then quickly made in her own palms the sign of pierced hands, and then stretched out her arms, as if pinioned to a cross.

Why was it that the simple gesture of

the mute brought home to Bessie's soul the precious truth that had hitherto escaped her!

"*He* was good. He suffered and died for us. He loves you. He loves me. We will love Him. He will take us to heaven."

Very rapidly Nannette wrote these words, and handed them to her friend, with a bright smile on her face, which seemed to say that all difficulties were cleared away, and nothing but joy and peace remained.

Well might Bessie love poor Nannette. Of all the gay friends who had gathered about her earthly path, none had spoken to her of the all-sufficient Saviour; it was the mute alone who had prompted her to seek His help to rule her spirit, and pointed her to the "pierced hands," which had power to wipe away her penitent tears and lead her to her reconciled heavenly Father.

Bessie could write no more of her own feelings that day; she only answered to Nannette's pleading, "I will try to remember what you say," and then she turned to other things. She had a package of pretty gifts for Nannette, proofs that she had thought of her where the Swiss children carve their ingenious toys, or other skilful European hands mould their delicate vases.

Specimens of such work Nannette received with artless pleasure, and yet the largest parcel was still unopened. It was evidently a picture; and Nannette waited eagerly as the cord was untied and the cover removed; then Bessie turned it suddenly towards her. It needed no explanation. The room represented was furnished with luxurious elegance. In it knelt two young girls. One was humbly dressed, and evidently a stranger there, as her simple straw hat lay

near her on the bed. The face of the other kneeling figure was hidden by the hands; but the dark eyes were evidently peering forth at her companion, whose uplifted countenance was marked by deep devotion. It was not a likeness of Nannette; the painter had idealized even Bessie's glowing description of her friend, and the mute seemed a fair-haired angel pleading for an erring sister of earth.

The flattered representation made no impression on earnest Nannette; she took the picture as it really was, as an evidence of Bessie's continued remembrance of her, and of the priceless teaching she in her ignorance had given. As such it was very dear to her, and she pressed it to her heart, while her eyes filled with sudden tears.

"I did not know the Lord Jesus then. I wanted to do for you in my mother's way. Now I know Him," wrote Nan-

nette. Words could not convey her sense of the difference between the two conditions as it flashed through her mind. Happy, happy indeed seemed to her her present lot.

"I shall try to know Him too. You must help me," Bessie replied; "I wish I could stay with you now, but I must go home to-day. To-morrow I want you to come to see me, and bring Bounce too. I have talked about you both to Mr. Fearing, the gentleman we travelled with, and he wants to see you, and I want to see Bounce myself. Will you come?"

"I will ask," was Nannette's reply, and then she sprang away towards the study of the Principal.

Nannette, on her return, needed no slow pencil and slate to tell Bessie that the desired permission was obtained; and with the hope of meeting on the morrow, the young friends parted.

CHAPTER XI.

A TIME OF NEED.

THE Asylum where Nannette had been so kindly taught was a large frame building, with two wings. In the central part of the edifice were the school-rooms, parlors, and the home of the Principal; while in the wings were the kitchens, dining-rooms, and dormitories.

The "girls' wing" was now to Nannette as familiar as the cottage of her childhood, and hallowed with even more holy associations. It was beside that little white bed she had learned to call upon God, and to draw nigh to him in humble trust. Very earnest were her evening prayers on the night after her interview with Bessie, and that dear friend was placed by Nannette in the

Saviour's keeping, with a sure trust that the good work begun in her would be continued unto the blessed end.

Calm and peaceful was Nannette's sleep, when she was rudely awakened by something pulling strongly at her arm. She put out her free hand to be relieved by feeling Bounce's rough coat and the unfailing caress of his privileged tongue. Yet Bounce seemed in no mood for lingering. He pulled Nannette so roughly that she was fairly roused, and opening her eyes she became conscious that the darkness of the apartment was doubled by the dense smoke with which it was filled. She understood in a moment the fearful truth. The building was on fire, and the faithful dog had sought her, to warn her of her danger.

Springing up, she hastened not to seek the stairway, but to speed from bed to bed, to rouse her sleeping room-mates,

and urge them to escape. Most unwillingly Bounce accompanied her on her errand of mercy. The stairway was filled with the frightened crowd, ere Nannette had completed her hasty round. Several sleepers yet remained to be aroused, and already the flames were casting a fearful light into the long apartment.

In a strength not her own Nannette lingered till she had every bed deserted, and then she allowed Bounce to draw her towards the stairway. Dizzy and confused she stumbled along in the dense smoke, and at length she fell down, overcome and fainting, in a dark passage-way by the stairs.

A crowd had already assembled without, and cheers had welcomed the appearance of the poor frightened inmates, who had barely escaped a sudden terrible death. At each other looked the pupils, and then anxious straining glances were

directed towards the burning building. One among their number was still missing! Where was Nannette?

Mr. Haviland, just roused from sleep, had carelessly asked a hurrying passer-by, "Where 's the fire?"

"At the Deaf and Dumb Asylum!" was the reply.

A quick pang shot across Mr. Haviland's heart as he thought of the helpless inmates, and of the dear mute who seemed so linked with his darling Bessie. The wealthy citizen was no more to sleep that night, leaving it to trained fire companies to stay the devouring element. He must be on the ground himself, and be perchance an instrument in the escape of some unfortunate being.

"The poor girls are all out," said a fireman in answer to Mr. Haviland's eager questioning, as he reached the fearfully illumined spot. But the trembling

group of girls were leaning forward with straining eyes, as if to pierce through the dense cloud of smoke pouring through the doorway. Mr. Haviland looked hastily around. The face he sought was not there. "Where is Nannette?" burst from his lips.

It was not long before a confused struggling figure was seen emerging from the door-way, and a wild shout rose from the multitude as Bounce came forth, drawing his prostrate mistress behind him. A compassionate group gathered round Nannette in a moment, and Mr. Haviland was the first to take her in his arms.

The cool air revived her, and she tried to rise. Bounce was at her side. At this sign of returning life he seemed satisfied, feebly licked her hand, and dropped to the ground. He had spent his last strength for her he loved best.

CHAPTER XII.

A WELCOME GUEST.

A STRANGER was lying in Mrs. Haviland's spare bedroom, a humble stranger, and yet for her the whole house was alive with interest. Nannette had sobbed till she was fairly worn out, and then had fallen into a quiet sleep.

Her first waking thought was of the playfellow of her childhood, good, faithful Bounce, and next of her father and mother. How would those fond parents have mourned if she had perished in the flames. Who would have cared for them in their old age, if Nannette had been taken away? Ashamed that her gratitude had been forgotten in her grief, Nannette hastened to lift up her heart in praise to her heavenly Father, who had

saved her in the midst of such awful peril. Then most simply she thanked him for having given her the noble animal who had been to her such a faithful friend, when but few could understand her poor gestures, and her scanty pleasures were of the humblest sort. It seemed to her a peculiar mark of the loving care of her Lord, that he should have sent her such a playfellow to make glad her childhood, and at length to save her life.

While Nannette was thus engaged, the door opened softly, and Bessie glided in as if afraid of waking the sleeper. It was hard for Bessie to realize that Nannette was totally deaf.

It was plain that Bessie too had been weeping, and she expected to find the mute plunged in inconsolable grief. She was surprised therefore when Nannette looked cheerfully in her face, and put

out her hand towards her, as if glad to see her.

Bessie had come up stairs eager to tell something to Nannette; but now she stood at her bedside, greatly missing the little slate which had proved so good a medium of communication the day before. Away went Bessie for paper and pencil, and then, perched on the bed by Nannette's side, she made ready for the talk she so much wished.

There was nothing in her way now; yet Bessie paused, and hesitatingly moved the point of her pencil. The bit of news she had meant as consolation might now awaken new grief.

At length she began: "Mr. Fearing and papa and mamma have all been talking about Bounce. They think he was a splendid dog; and papa and Mr. Fearing say they will give money to help build a new asylum, better than the old

one; and Mr. Fearing says he will have a beautiful marble statue, just like Bounce, to stand on the front steps. I know you will like that."

Nannette's eyes did fill with tears; but she answered simply, "I should like that;" and then she added, "I am glad I did not die in the fire, Miss Bessie. I want to live, to take care of my father and mother."

"Did you really think you might die?" asked Bessie, almost shuddering.

"I thought so, but it did not seem hard." Nannette's pencil was quiet a moment, and then she added, "I remembered how the Lord Jesus was in the fire with the 'three children.' I think he was with *me*, Miss Bessie."

Bessie looked earnestly at Nannette. Yes, Bessie was sure that Nannette was one of those who have realized the promise, "If any man love me, he shall be

loved of my Father, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." She had no words in which to tell that humble, artless child of God how all were praising the heroism with which she had perilled her own life for the safety of others. Bessie did not wish to praise or flatter then; she wanted to sit at the feet of her friend and be taught of Jesus. She wanted to know something of the trust and peace which were as a pure fountain in the soul of the mute.

CHAPTER XII.

BEN AT HOME.

Ben Kuhn was spending a day at home, quite an unusual thing for him, and an unpleasant variety he seemed to think it. Ben was by no means a young man, though he had a young wife. The honest laborer had seen much exposure and much hard work, and now he was made to realize that even his sturdy bones could not be always as sound as they had been. He had fought against the conviction as long as he could, and he had fairly to own that rheumatism was getting to be one of his familiar acquaintances.

Kitty had learned to know when Ben was stiff as he came home at evening, and to save him every unnecessary step;

and Ben was now glad to keep out of the drizzling rain or the heavy night-dews.

It was a damp fall day, and every gaily-coated leaf was glossy with its dewy covering. Ben had passed a wakeful night with the dull grinding pains that traversed his whole frame, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, and he did not dare to venture out in the damp air.

"I 'm getting to be an old man early," he said dolorously to Kitty. "Yes, I 'm growing old, and not a cent laid by yet. I wonder who 's to take care of me when I can't hobble about any more?"

Kitty smiled a gay smile as she said, "Who but I?"

"A pretty slim crutch, and likely to break if too much is put on it," answered Ben, with a look half admiring, half desponding.

Kitty's slight figure and pale clear

complexion did not promise the most rugged health, and seemed to justify Ben's remark. But she quietly bore her husband's depreciatory view of her capabilities, and said pleasantly, "There 's Nannette too; she 's as tough as oak. She 'll be coming home before many months are over. That 's something to look forward to."

"She 's a handy child, sure enough, and will know just how to wait on her old father, and to lift the loads that are too much for Kitty Kuhn; but there 's a poor look-out for old age for both of us, Kitty. Not a copper laid by, and nobody to earn for us. Poor Nannette! it a'n't her fault. She 'd dig out her eyes for us, if that would do us any good."

"Ben, we have never wanted for daily bread," said Kitty seriously, "and I do n't see as we have any thing to do with what is to come. You are a hearty

fellow yet. Let me see, this is the first day you have been laid by these two months. We are well enough off now, with this bit of a roof free of rent, and wood to cut whenever you choose to lay your hand to it. Don't you think we might be thankful to-day, instead of fretting for what is to be after a while? We might trust the Lord for that, it seems to me."

Going by sight was more in accordance with Ben's notions than the more difficult effort of faith. It had been easy for him to work on cheerfully while his own strong arm seemed a fortune in itself, sure to bring in its yearly interest; but now his heart shrank as he thought of the uncertain future. He was truthful, and so answered to Kitty's last remark, "May-be you are right, Kitty; but things look black to me to-day."

"There, there 's somebody stopping at

the door," said Kitty quickly, as she threw aside her working apron, and smoothed down her hair.

The stranger was a gentlemanly looking person, about twenty-five years of age, and yet he was so sun-burned that he might have passed for full ten years older.

"Is this Ben Kuhn's house?" was his inquiry.

"Sure enough; and here is Ben at home to-day," said Kitty, ushering the stranger into the room.

Ben looked up as if half ashamed to be found in the house at midday, and he apologized as he rose with difficulty, "I'm a little under the weather, sir; a touch of the rheumatism. It puts me by for a day or so, now and then."

"Do you remember John Fearing?" said the stranger, standing directly in front of Ben's chair.

"Master John," said Ben, putting out his hand for a hearty grasp. "Now I do feel old. Why, you are grown up, and do n't look a bit as you used to, and yet there is something of you left yet. Kitty, this is young Master John, that left Bounce with me. You 'd like to hear about the dog, I suppose; you were so uncommon fond of him. He 's been the best and knowingest creature that ever lived; but he 's getting old now. You can't begin to understand what he has been, almost as wise as folks. But what ails you, Master John?"

Mr. Fearing had a long story to tell about poor Bounce, and there was not a dry eye in the company; yet Kitty's first exclamation was, "Praise be to God, Nannette is safe! The dear child! That was just like her, never to think of herself till everybody else was looked after. I always said she 'd go through fire and

water for anybody she loved. Are you sure she is n't hurt?"

"Only a little sore and bruised—nothing that will last; and so sweet and grateful, that it is a lesson to see her. I think she has done us all good. She wants to see you, and she is coming home as soon as she can for a little visit; and then, if you and your good husband are willing, they are going to keep her four years more at the new Asylum, to give her a thorough education. This they do as a reward for her noble behavior."

"And no more than she deserves," said Ben bluntly.

"It will be hard to spare her so long," said the mother.

"I don't see any need of sparing her. I suppose you have not promised to live here all your life, have you, Ben?" said Mr. Fearing.

"I never want to have a better roof

over my head. We've done very well here," said Ben, whose complaining mood was over. "I don't quite take your meaning, sir."

"If you could get work nearer the city, where you could have Nannette with you, and just send her to school every day, may-be you would like it."

Kitty's face brightened, and she said earnestly, "And then we could go to church too, Ben. We ought to think of that."

Ben did think a great deal before he concluded to accept Mr. Fearing's proposal. It was at length decided that Ben and Kitty should take a small house on Mr. Fearing's farm, only a mile from the city, it being particularly understood that Ben should be master on his own little patch of ground, and earn his living like an honest, industrious man.

CHAPTER XIV.

LIGHT AT EVENING-TIME.

Ben Kuhn had been right in some of his forebodings. Old age did come upon him early, and his enemy the rheumatism took the strength out of his sturdy arms before his head was crowned with hoary hair. Kitty too was by no means robust, though her sweet cheerful spirit well-nigh made those around her forget that she had any pains of her own to bear.

If there was any thing of which Ben Kuhn had a horror, it was being supported by charity. It would not have been more agreeable to him to live on "Master John's" bounty than on that of the benevolent societies in which the growing western city abounded. Indeed,

Ben had been heard to say that the only alms that he could ever take without a blush, were the church offerings of his own fellow-Christians; that, if absolutely necessary, would not be so very hard, but he hoped he should never come even to that.

There was doubtless a great deal of pride mixed with Ben's better feelings; but for a man who has been trained to honest industry, it must ever be hard to submit to living upon the kindness even of the most generous.

Who then was the stay of Ben's old age? Who was it that spared Kitty's delicate frame the hard labor she could not perform? Could it be the mute?

Little Nannette is now a woman grown. Hers is a continual ministry of love. Her busy hands make all comfortable at home in the morning, and her bright parting smile lingers in her

father's mind during the long day that she is absent.

Round her she gathers a class of the pupils at the spacious Deaf and Dumb Asylum, and teaches them in her own ingenious way. She can bear with the most wayward, and persevere with the most stupid. If she will but be patient, she is sure that her earnest longings will yet be gratified. Are not these dear helpless lambs of the Saviour's fold, whom she may lay on his bosom? Once she was herself a poor blinded wanderer, knowing not the good Shepherd. Now she has found him, "full of grace and truth;" and gladly would she lead the little ones to him, that they may know his voice, and follow him to the eternal pastures.

How the children love her! How they cluster about her, and look up to her with new respect, when they learn the

story of the statue in the centre of the lawn! They have a tear to shed for Bounce, but their hearts are stirred with a deeper feeling as they think of Nannette, and they resolve to be like her, loving and unselfish. Ah, Nannette, with her closed ears and silent lips, is doing a work which should bring a blush to the cheeks of our Saviour's more favored children. If her talents be few, she is improving them faithfully for the great Lord of the vineyard.

It is not the mutes alone who have learned from Nannette: Bessie Haviland blesses the day when her dumb friend first prompted her to seek the help of her Saviour in her struggles with her own wilful spirit.

It was a merciful providence for Bessie, that made Nannette, for those few weeks after the fire, an inmate of Mr. Haviland's household. Day by day, and

hour by hour, Bessie's new resolutions were strengthened, and her yearning soul taught where to find peace and joy in believing. And now, when they kneel together at the communion, Bessie's grateful heart acknowledges that but for Nannette she might still be an outcast, wandering far away from the Master's table.

"Where is our Nannette? Isn't it time for her to come home?" says Ben Kuhn, as the evening draws near. "The dear child! If her life is spared, she will never leave us. Strange that she should be a teacher and work for her poor father, and teach him too how to trust in God. We shall have her, Kitty, while we live; and if we die first, we need not fear to leave her here. It will not be a cold world for her. While the deaf and dumb are left in the country there will be homes open to her, rich

homes and poor homes, rich hearts and poor hearts. They all love her. She sows the good seed and works for the heavenly Master. We can leave her to him and his true children without a fear. God will ever bless Nannette!"

PZ6
B25W66
1962